

# ILLINOIS FAMILIES Now and Forever

Families by Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship™

Department of Children and Family Services



## From the DCFS Director

Bryan Samuels

Given the state budget deficit, the DCFS Fiscal Year '05 budget accordingly decreased by \$77.8 million. However, considering that we are serving the lowest number of youth since 1990 (18,647 in July) I see this as an opportunity to focus on quality instead of quantity. We looked at programs to see where we could best acquire services. In some cases, we did cut some contracts. Yet we preserved all of our bare-bones, critical functions. So where does this leave us?

This fiscal year, DCFS will:

- Increase specialized foster care for older youth
- Provide more development services to traditional and relative foster homes
- Implement Integrated Assessment for 3,000 new cases
- Focus on education, substance abuse treatment and build a trauma network
- Redesign services for youths transitioning to adulthood
- Devote more resources to train DCFS and private agency staff

My hope is that we will be doing a better job for families with the resources we have.

## 250 apply for 48 scholarships

The 48 DCFS scholarship recipients may still be adjusting to their campuses, courses and cafeteria food. Yet, these students can rise to both academic and personal challenges.

"In the applications, they talk about hardships and being told over and over that they would not be successful. Reading about their accomplishments after such a difficult start in life is heart-warming," said one member of the scholarship selection committee.

At the July award ceremony, Connie Payton, of the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation, expressed amazement at their achievements in academics,



*DCFS Scholarship recipients gather at the annual celebration luncheon before heading off to college.*

activities and community service. But in addition to congratulations, the recipients headed off to school with up to four years of tuition and academic expense waivers at participating Illinois state universities, medical coverage and a monthly stipend of \$445.

### The 2004 DCFS Scholarship Award recipients are:

Matthew Boeck  
Cassie Bradley  
Jamie Brewton  
Devin Brown  
Kimberly Brown-Riley  
Jeweline Burks  
Kyle Carpenter  
Michael Cruz  
Stephanie Dagen  
Audrey Davis  
Nicole Fiala  
Shimeka Gillespie  
Daphne Hannan  
Alice Helmick  
Sandra Hill  
Charles Ingram

Katina Jarrett  
Felicia Johnson  
Lisa Johnson  
Janea Kelow  
Nicole Kerr  
Paris Liberty  
Natalie Luna  
Anthony Maheu  
Monique McGlory  
Kortney McKee  
Amanda McKenney  
Joshua Melvin  
Alicia Miller  
Monique Moore  
Daniel Palafox  
Erica Patterson

Crystal Reyes  
Jessica Rodrigues  
Bertha Sharp  
Amanda Sikora  
Roger Smith-Bergsrud  
Sharde Snyder  
Dajuana Starks  
Olga Steele  
Nicole Surf  
Karen Thingvold  
Hanson Voss  
Montrice Wade  
Precious Watson  
Mia Witherell  
Precious Wright  
Tikiya Young

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## Youth in college get gifts from “home”

Being away at college can be especially difficult for young people without families or without connections after leaving foster care or a residential placement. About 650 DCFS youth will attend college this fall, and all have been invited to sign up for a new program designed to bring them a bit of support and encouragement. The Care Package Program is the brainchild of the young members of the Statewide Youth Advisory Board and the adults on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council.

The Care Package Program links students with an adult committed to sending care packages monthly and for holidays, birthdays or other special occasions. Volunteers that choose to take on this role will be linked with a student and will receive a list of the youth's needs and preferences. The volunteers will be responsible for making sure that packages are sent and students are required to acknowledge them.

“I am looking forward to this new ‘job’ of supporting a college student. I remember when I was in college. My parents constantly sent me goodies and reminders of their support,” said Debra DeValdivielso, a DCFS day care licensing worker who signed up to be a volunteer.

“I was overwhelmed and so encouraged by the response from DCFS staff to volunteer for this program. I hope that foster parents, too, will appreciate this new avenue to support our young

people,” said Deputy Director Velma Williams.

The launch of the program comes from the collaboration of many DCFS functions, starting with the Office of Foster Care Support Services, led by Williams, and including the divisions of Service Intervention, Operations and External Affairs. Even with the internal structure and staff volunteers, foster and adoptive parents are still needed to volunteer to make sure that every student can be part of the care package program this year.

The care packages don't need to be elaborate, but will surely be appreciated. Every college student can use snacks, especially homemade baked goods, school supplies, personal use products, or food coupons. All the little things that a parent would think of are the details that tuition payments just can't cover.

“I have been living on my own for the last three years”, said Luradine Evans, a fourth year student at Northeastern University. “I don't have any extra money so I am grateful for food coupons. I even got excited to see deodorant on the list of things we could sign up for.”

Requests for guidelines and a participation agreement for the care package program can be directed to Diane DeLeonardo in the Office of Foster Parent Support at 217-524-2422 or via e-mail at [ddeleona@idcfs.state.il.us](mailto:ddeleona@idcfs.state.il.us).

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## Education funds

The Office of Education and Transition Services is offering a new Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) to assist youth with educational expenses.

The voucher is for a one-time payment up to \$5,000 to fund educational expenses, tuition, room and board, books and supplies not covered by financial aid. To be eligible for the program youth must:

- Be 16 - 23 years old
- Attend a public/private four-year university, junior college, or a one-year vocational training program (in or out of state)
- Have moved to adoption or guardianship after age 16

Youth who meet the criteria should request an application by contacting the Office of Education and Transition Services at 309-693-5150.

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## More info on \$3,000 grant

A story in the previous issue regarding the \$3,000 Independence Facilitation Grants prompted many calls. Only youth who were 14 - 18 when they were part of an adoption or subsidized guardianship finalized between March 15, 2001 and January 31, 2003 are eligible for the grant. They are already flagged in the DCFS system. Caregivers do not have to do anything further. If you wish to reconfirm eligibility, send the child's name, birthday and date of the adoption or transfer of guardianship to June Dorn at DCFS 100 W. Randolph, Chicago IL 60601 or email [jdorn@idcfs.state.il.us](mailto:jdorn@idcfs.state.il.us).

# Call someone who CARES when there's a crisis at 800-345-9049

## DCFS joins other agencies to extend crisis services statewide

The toll-free number stays the same, but the state as of July has expanded services for youth who need attention in a psychiatric crisis with the CARES (Crisis and Referral Entry System) crisis line. DCFS is working with the Departments of Public Aid and Human Services to extend crisis psychiatric services beyond youth in DCFS care. This means that children who have been adopted or moved to guardianship, as well as those living with their birth families may also be assisted, if they are eligible for Medicaid or publicly-funded care. In addition to widening the pool of clients who can be served, the program is also making it easier for more providers to offer new services to families.

Caregivers may already be familiar with the SASS program (Screening, Assessment and Support Services) that provided independent evaluations prior to a child in DCFS care being admitted to a psychiatric hospitalization. Under the new program, if a child is having a serious psychiatric crisis, the caregiver will still call **800-345-9049**. Now CARES staff will determine if the situation needs to go forward to SASS. The CARES line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Parents, DCFS or private agency staff, caregivers, school personnel and others may call if they believe a child is in a psychiatric crisis that may require hospitalization.

For example, if a parent were to wake up on a Saturday night to a commotion as their 12-year-old foster child is threatening to harm himself, a call to CARES would determine three circumstances:

1. **It is a psychiatric crisis and/or the child is a danger to self, others or property.**

*If so, an immediate referral would be made to the local SASS provider responsible for homes in that Local Area Network. CARES could also connect law enforcement agencies, if needed.*

2. **There is no psychiatric emergency and/or the child is not a danger to self or others, but the family needs immediate assistance for placement stabilization.**

*Then CARES would make an immediate referral for community-based services through the System of Care (SOC) network of providers. This could include counseling or other types of support.*

3. **It is not a psychiatric emergency, the child is not a danger to self or others and the family does not need crisis placement stabilization services.**

*CARES will help the caller identify an appropriate resource, including a non-emergency referral to a community-based SOC provider.*

Screeners for SASS are required to respond to all calls from CARES within 30 minutes and be able to respond face-to-face with families within 90 minutes, preferably where the crisis is taking place. The SASS providers are charged with first determining whether there are options other than hospitalization available to help stabilize a child in crisis. The SASS provider will work with the caregiver and may make referrals to other community resources. Under the new program, providers who already serve DCFS youth in other capacities may also be able to offer supportive mental health services. This change should give caregivers more options for obtaining satisfactory services.

If a psychiatric hospitalization is necessary, SASS will work with the family to select the most appropriate psychiatric hospital. Any crisis case that gets referred to SASS can stay open for 90 days, with extensions when needed until the child and family become stable. The SASS provider is responsible for ensuring that the referrals are made, registering those referrals with CARES and ensuring that the child receives seamless care.

Questions about the CARES line and the newly enhanced SASS program can be directed to Jane Hastings, DCFS SASS Project Manager at 312-814-6805.



# Top Implementation plans all fall within one point of perfect

Each year, the DCFS regions and private agencies provide an implementation plan detailing how its foster care program addresses the Foster Parent Law. When the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council reviewed the 2004 plans, the top five scores nosed in at just fractions away from the perfect 104 points.

- Casa Central Social Services, Chicago
- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford
- Evangelical Child and Family Agency, Wheaton
- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, DesPlaines

All foster care programs that contract with DCFS must submit plans that score a minimum of 75 points to be accepted. Thus, the top scoring plans represent the best of the best. Deputy Director Velma Williams, whose division is responsible for managing implementation of the Foster Parent Law, invited each of the agencies to the July meeting of the Council. They each received congratulations and a plaque from Director Samuels and Chairperson Adrienne Welenc.

The roadmap to an acceptable implementation plan is contained within the Foster Parent Law. Casa Central earned the highest marks in part by describing in detail how the agency implements each of the 14 foster parent rights as well as how it helps foster



*Chair Adrienne Welenc (c) and Director Samuels congratulate foster parent Judy Vasquez (l) and Casa Central's Ann Alvarez and Nilda LaLuz for the top score.*

parents meet each of the 17 responsibilities. Casa Central also uses a checklist with its case-workers so they can understand the plan and incorporate it as they serve families.



*Geoff Franklin, Cathy Zeier and Vivien Williamson of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Rockford accept their second-place award from Chair Adrienne Welenc (c) and Director Samuels (r).*

The connection between the plan and the families it is intended to serve was also an important factor in the plan from Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockford. The agency holds foster parent forums to gather input to the plan. Catholic Charities' foster parents and staff develop, review and implement the plan so that it serves families and the staff charged with implementing it.

At Evangelical Child and Family Agency, last year's plan served as

a guide to a successful plan in 2004. Each plan receives feedback from the Council members that scored the plan and a letter with the Deputy Director's comments. Evangelical paid careful attention to the feedback and incorporated it into this year's award-winning plan.



*Chair Adrienne Welenc (l) and director Samuels commend Heather and June Aldrin (mother-daughter partners in foster care) and Barbara Hellmer of Evangelical Child and Family Agency for scoring among the top five implementation plans.*

Feedback came in a different form at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The foster care program used an Implementation Plan Reaction Survey to maintain the integrity of the plan. As an added feature, the agency offers a specialized



*Council members Heidi Darville and Sylvia Florey were excused from judging but part of celebrating with their colleague MarySue Mesches (r) of Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Chicago as Chair Adrienne Welenc (c) and Director Samuels bestow the implementation plan award.*

## Implementation plans, con't.

training to prepare families who will be caring for adolescents.

The commitment to training was also evident in the plan from Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. The DesPlaines office demonstrated a comprehensive and well-organized training plan for foster parents. Additionally, the plan included improved timeframes for reimbursing foster parent expenses and an updated grievance policy.



*Foster parent Rhonda Petties displays the plaque shared with Lutheran Social Services in Des Plaines' John Schnier, Delores Rolland and Sylvia Jajko (also a council member) after Chair Adrienne Welenc and Director Samuels announced the agency plan scored in the top five.*

"These agencies prove that when quality is the focus, then the agency, the families and the children all win," said DCFS Director Samuels.

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council takes its mandate very seriously as it reviews each plan. The task takes hours of time from each member, in addition to the staff time from the Office of Foster Parent Support Services. However, even as expectations rise, so do the scores, making the effort worthwhile in light of the results.



## Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council bulletin

### New teen committee

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council established the Adolescent Issues committee as a standing committee. The members and (non-member volunteers) will monitor DCFS policy and work with staff on issues specific to older youth in care. This will take on many forms.

For instance, at the July meeting, the Council invited Deputy Director Cynthia Moreno of the Division of Service Intervention to address the group on initiatives underway directed at youth moving to adulthood. The Office of Transition and Education Services is conducting focus groups with young people to get more input on the services they need. There is also a movement to help juniors and seniors prepare to enroll in college.

The adults on the committee pledged to work closely with the DCFS staff as they make further plans. Moreno said she looked forward to the experience and the insight that the council members can provide.

### Joint meeting with Youth Advisory Board

The adults on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council had a special joint meeting in September with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board. The youth and

adults convened an evening meeting in Peoria. The meeting is an annual event, and the foster parents look forward to getting a pulse on the issues that directly affect youth.

### New member for Cook South

Erma Lee joins the council, representing the Cook South region. She and her husband have been foster parents to 24 children in 17 years. They are currently caring for three teen boys. Lee also has professional experience as an elementary teacher with the Chicago Public Schools. She has been active in the regional board and is pleased to step up to work with the statewide group.



*Erma Lee*

### Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council meetings

- Friday, October 29 in Effingham at the Keller Convention Center, 1202 N. Keller Drive
- Friday, November 19 in Urbana at Eastland Suites, 1907 N. Cunningham Avenue

Meetings begin at 9 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. Questions about the Council can be directed to the Office of Foster Parent Support Services at 217-524-2422.

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## What readers say they want to read about in the newsletter

Earlier this year, we asked you to do a survey about this newsletter. More than 150 families took time to respond. Here's a snap shot of what you said...

- 62 percent of readers were greatly interested in foster care rules/procedures and the obligations of foster parents and 59 percent in adoption rules/procedures.
- Juvenile court, resolving DCFS disputes and child and family teams drew the least interest, with nearly 30 percent replying of little interest or not applicable.
- Financial implications drew the most interest (69 percent) among the adoption/guardianship topics, followed closely by obtaining community resources and accessing free post-adoption services.
- Self-esteem came in as the medical/mental health condition of greatest interest. It was followed by attachment disorder (65 percent) and developmental disabilities (59 percent).
- 86 percent of respondents were greatly or somewhat interested in resources for medical specialties, dental services and mental health.
- Working with schools/teachers and special education services tied (66 percent) for the education topic that was of greatest interest.
- Of the age-related topics, readers expressed the most interest in teen sexuality issues (58 percent), followed by services for teens (53 percent) and tantrums/biting/aggression (53 percent).
- Free services/products got the interest of 92 percent who responded to the family life topics. Behavior management came next (89 percent) followed by handling stress (85 percent).

**Jeers:** The newsletter comes too late (three responses). It doesn't have enough local articles (eight responses).

**Cheers:** I like everything/don't change (23 responses). Informative articles and updates on policy (46 responses). I like Family for Me pictures best (16 responses)

"Tell It Like It Is" was the regular feature that interested the most readers (75 percent), so we will keep the questions coming and look forward to hearing from you.

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## DCFS hosts families at State Fair with ride and food benefits

This year the DCFS Office of Communications made sure that foster, adoptive, and guardianship families once again felt welcome at the Illinois State Fair. The prices went up slightly for entry and carnival rides, but DCFS still delivered a bargain that couldn't be beat. Armed with discounted admission, reduced price passes for rides and coupons for food, a brigade of families marched through the DCFS tent. There they found refreshments and information on services and programs. This year the family

photos went digital. This gave families a better souvenir and allowed DCFS to have updated file photos of youth in care.

DCFS management was on hand to meet families and answer questions. There was not a lot of time for business with all of the fair's activities and attractions. Given all the fun, a special thank you goes out to the many organizations and staff members who volunteered time to work in the tent.



*Sharon and Kimberly Garth and Jasmine Stewart of Chicago were part of the 11 bus caravan to the State Fair. They came well-prepared for fun, despite the drizzle.*





## Clip and Share: 8 myths and realities about adoption

### Facts:

As of the 2000 Census, there were 1.5 million children under age 18 in America who joined their family through adoption, two percent of all children in the U.S.

In the U.S., there are 5 million people today who were adopted. More than 100,000 children are adopted each year.

65 percent of all Americans have a personal connection to adoption and view it favorably.

### Myth: Birthparents can show up at any time to reclaim their child.

**Reality:** Once an adoption is finalized, the adoptive family is recognized as the child's family by law. Despite the publicity surrounding a few high-profile cases, post-adoption revocations are extremely rare.

### Myth: Birthparents are all troubled teens.

**Reality:** Most birthparents today are over 18, but lack the resources to care for a child. It is generally with courage and love for their child that they terminate their parental rights.

### Myth: Adopted children are more likely to be troubled than birth children.

**Reality:** Research shows that adoptees are as well-adjusted as their non-adopted peers. There is

virtually no difference in psychological functioning between them.

### Myth: Open adoption causes problems for children.

**Reality:** Adoptees are not confused by contact with their birthparents. They benefit from the increased understanding that their birthparents gave them life but their forever families take care of and nurture them.

### Myth: Parents can't love an adopted child as much as they would a biological child.

**Reality:** Love and attachment are not the result of nor guaranteed by biology. The intensity of bonding and depth of emotion are the same, regardless of how the child joined the family.

### Myth: Adoption is outrageously expensive and out of reach for most families.

**Reality:** Adoption is often no more expensive than giving birth. Costs to adopt domestically average \$15,000, before the \$10,000 Adoption Tax Credit and benefits that many employers offer. Note: When adopting from the Illinois child welfare system, adoption costs are covered in most cases.



### Myth: There are very few babies being placed for adoption in the U.S.

**Reality:** 20,000 or more U.S.-born infants are placed for adoption each year—more than the number of international adoptions yearly.

### Myth: It takes years to complete an adoption.

**Reality:** The average time span of adoption is one to two years. The majority of domestic and international adopters who responded to a recent poll by *Adoptive Families Magazine* completed their adoptions in less than a year.

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## Post Adoption/ Guardianship Helpful Hint

If your family is thinking about moving out of Illinois, and you receive an adoption or guardianship subsidy, be sure to discuss continued medical assistance **before** you pack your bags.

Illinois is part of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance, which assists adoptive families moving in or out of Illinois. Depending on which state you are moving to and your particular case, three things can happen. You could:

1. Receive a medical card from the new state
2. Continue to use the Illinois Public Aid card for eligible services with a provider in your new state who enrolls in the Illinois Medicaid program
3. Pay for services and be reimbursed by DCFS at the Medicaid rate

Your subsidy worker can provide more information. Currently, there is no formalized Compact program for guardianship families. Relative guardians can apply for the Medicaid program in the new state. If a guardian is not eligible or not related to the child, the subsidy worker can go over more options.

Always check in with the subsidy worker before you move or obtain services. If you don't know your subsidy worker, contact the Statewide Post Adoption and Guardianship Information and Referral Line at 800-572-2390.



## Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

At the August meeting of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council, members prepared for an upcoming meeting with Director Samuels. The group set out its priority issues, which include:

- Increased availability of post-adoption/guardianship services
- More focused attention to sibling connections
- Additional training for families licensed with both DCFS and private agencies
- Need for more staff trained in adoption

### Post-adoption budget

After the dust settled on the state budget, the resources for post-adoption and guardianship remained mostly intact. The amount for adoption/guardianship subsidies (those in place and pending) did not change. The Family Centered Services contracts for adoption-related services also will continue in the 11 Local Area Networks. The contract with Illinois State University's Child and Family Research Center was not renewed.

### Adoption training

The Council selected members to take a closer look at the training curriculum available through DCFS and the private agencies for families and staff. DCFS announced that it will no longer provide the "Adopt Only" training and instead will refer families to the full PRIDE training. The Council will also review the Adoption Conversion training and other offerings for possible updates.

### Council Membership opening

Members of the Adoption Advisory Council are appointed by the DCFS Director with recommendation from members or from the DCFS region or private agencies. The Council aims to have representation of adoptive parents, professionals and adopted individuals. Currently there are opportunities for individuals to join the Council in the following areas:

#### Cook Central

One adoptive parent and one adopted person

#### Cook South

One adoptive parent

#### Cook North

Two adoptive parents and one adopted person. There is also room for a foster or adoptive parent to represent Cook County for the child Welfare Advisory Council.

#### Northern Region

One adoptive parent and one adopted individual

#### Central Region

Two adoptive parents

#### Southern Region

One adopted person

The Council welcomed its newest member, Kim Wheelock of the Chad-dock Child and Family Center in Quincy. Wheelock will represent the perspective and concerns of service providers and their clients in the Central Region.



Kim Wheelock





## Adoption Learning Partners launches two new on-line courses for families

Two new Internet-based courses were recently launched on the Adoption Learning Partners ([www.adoptionlearningpartners.org](http://www.adoptionlearningpartners.org)) web site. ***Finding the Missing Pieces: Helping Adopted Children Cope with Grief and Loss*** will help caregivers understand the feelings children have about adoption. The course also gives ideas on how adults can help a child express and deal with these feelings and come to understand what adoption means in his life and as a part of his identity.

The second new course is ***Becoming Your Child's Best Advocate: Help for Adoptive Parents***. In this course, you will learn more about the resources that are available to meet an adopted child's needs and get ideas on how to communicate and work with the individuals and agencies that provide these

services. Specific information on resources for Illinois families is highlighted throughout the course.

These two new courses, as well as courses on transracial adoption, attachment, talking with your child about adoption and the adoption tax credit are on the Adoption Learning Partners web site. Because the courses are on the Internet, they are available anytime and anywhere, using a computer at home, library or school.

The on-line courses are approved for foster care training credit and are free of charge to Illinois families licensed by DCFS.

For more information, contact Vicki DuFour by phone (800-566-3995) or e-mail [info@adoptionlearningpartners.org](mailto:info@adoptionlearningpartners.org)



## Adoption Study for Teens

Adoption researchers at Illinois State University want to learn more about how adoption affects youth. The Center for Adoption Studies and Attachment Lab would like to interview youth adopted from child welfare who are 15-17 years old. The study will focus on finding out more about factors that lead to positive adoption adjustment, particularly the topics of attachment and identity.

Participants will be compensated for their time with a \$25 gift card to Old Navy. Interested individuals will be invited to an adoption agency in your local area for the study. The study will take approximately two hours to complete. The adolescent will be given an interview, and both the teen and a parent will be asked to complete a set of questionnaires.

Prospective volunteers or those with questions can contact the Center for Adoption Studies at 309-438-8628 or send an email to: [kkwoodm@ilstu.edu](mailto:kkwoodm@ilstu.edu). If no one is available to answer your call, please leave a message stating that you're interested in the "Adopted Teen Study," and leave your name, address, and phone numbers.



## Support groups can get support, too

Parent support groups can go a long way in building and maintaining strong families created through adoption. The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) is taking its vast experience in parent group development and coupling it with funds from the Freddie Mac Foundation to strengthen adoption support groups.

NACAC staff will partner with existing groups or help launch new groups in Illinois and major urban areas around the country. It will

share its leadership model and offer existing groups techniques to boost membership or enhance support services. New group leaders can learn the basics of starting a group, program development, fundraising and facilitation.

For information, contact Diane Martin Hushman at 651-644-3036 or [hushman@nacac.org](mailto:hushman@nacac.org). She will be holding several workshops in Chicago over the next year and can also consult with individuals by phone or e-mail.

## Tell it like it is: Readers respond

Families Now and Forever wants to hear the “real deal” on caring for children from those who know best – you! Here is what you had to say to the question: **What is one example of a time when a child welfare professional impressed you by going above and beyond the call of duty?**

Once he [our son] was placed in our home, Adoption Specialist Linda Saliamonas got us the best Play Therapist. We had weekly conversations long after our son was adopted. She knew our son very well, and he knew her more as a friend. He called her Linda with the funny voice.

*Debbie Rosengren*

Catholic Charities (in Springfield) has a 24/7 pager for their foster parents but Pat Morgan went beyond that and gave us her personal 24/7 cell phone number. We have had to call Pat very late at night and very early in the morning and while she is on vacation time, but Pat is always there for us.

*Keith and Judy Altevogt*

My family and I were blessed with a new baby girl, two days old, right from the hospital. One week before turning three she was returned home. A worker [Debbie Hawkins], not even the child’s worker, called several times to check on us and to lift our spirits. She mailed us a very special card that I cherish yet today. More good news came six months later—our little girl returned to us and she is now our loving daughter.

*Marilyn Bourland*

Greg Fliehler, who was an administrative assistant in the DCFS Northern Region, came to our home when a child in our home who had severe emotional disturbances was being indicated in a report. He was not directly involved in the case; however, he came to our home on a Saturday and gave direction and comfort to my husband and myself. He helped arrange adoption preservation in our home. We received excellent counseling and always felt that we had support in raising a very difficult child.

*Rhea Fitch*

*Editor’s Note:* This question came to my mind when I remembered one of our first caseworkers with the Jewish Children’s Bureau. Every Sunday morning Jolynn picked up two children living with a Jewish family and drove them nearly 20 miles so they could go to church with my family. This went on for months. We fell hard (according to her “master plan”) and recently celebrated our son Orlando’s five-year adoption anniversary.

The new question is...**What does your family do to minimize stress around the upcoming holiday season?**

You can contact me with your response by e-mail at [vjames@idcfs.state.il.us](mailto:vjames@idcfs.state.il.us) or by phone at 312-814-6824. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Vanessa James, Editor



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## A family for me

**Christopher [5522]** Christopher is a chess whiz! This smart young man loves to work on new strategies that will help him compete on the chessboard. When he's not focused on kings, queens, and pawns, Christopher, 15, likes to spend time on the basketball court competing athletically with friends and classmates. In fact, his dream is to become a professional athlete. In quieter moments, he likes to exercise his imagination by reading science fiction books.

Christopher's worker says he has a clear sense of right and wrong. He enjoys amusement parks, sporting events, and outdoor activities. The family for Christopher would love him and provide him with clear rules and guidance as he grows. You can also help him stay in contact with his brother. Christopher would like to have a mom and a dad and live in a city.

**Trevien [7369]** When you meet 10-year-old Trevien, he may seem a little shy at first - but once you get to know him, you'll realize he is a warm and friendly young man with a great sense of humor! You'll also learn he loves to play sports, especially basketball. When he's not working on his ball-handling skills or practicing his jump shot, Trevien likes relaxing outdoors. You can often find him down at the local fishing hole with a line in the water.

His worker said Trevien takes pride in his appearance. He is affectionate and likes playing with other children. The family for Trevien would be loving and patient

with him and nurture his interests. Trevien would like a family that will help him maintain contact with his brothers and sisters.

**Brandon [6906]** Brandon, 11, is a radio fan! Any kind of music is OK with him, but he especially likes soothing songs with a good melody. He enjoys watching TV, too - as long as the shows aren't too scary. When it comes time for a snack, he loves peanut butter sandwiches and bananas. Although Brandon does not speak, he communicates with a big smile to people he knows.

His foster parents said Brandon is lively and likable. The family for Brandon would provide him with continuous supervision and assistance. Brandon responds well to love and will do best with a patient, nurturing family.

**David [6954]** David, 14, is a likeable young man with a positive, upbeat attitude about life. He enjoys trying new things, such as running track in school or mastering the latest video game. He is interested in everything about airplanes and aviation, and looks forward to being a member of the Civil Air Patrol.

David's foster parents and teachers said that he likes to please others and is eager to help. His worker said David is cooperative and follows directions well. David said he wants to be loved and to feel like he belongs to someone. He'd like to be part of an active family that enjoys life.

**Quartey [6506]** Quartey, 8, loves Spider-Man! You can often find him playing with his Spider-Man action figure, or practicing gymnastics so he can follow in the footsteps of his hero. When he's at school, Quartey loves to read and do science experiments. Back at home, he likes to look after the family dog and play with fetch with him outside.

His foster parent and teacher said Quartey is a loveable child with a charming personality. He has a great sense of humor and loves to tell jokes. Quartey's future family could provide him with love and affection. Parents should give him a regular routine and consistent limits to help him feel safe and secure.

**Amanda [7409]** You may see this creative young lady's name on a book jacket before too long! Amanda, 16, loves to write stories and poems. She also keeps a journal where she records her thoughts about each day. Amanda is friendly and sociable, and she gets along well with others.

According to her teacher, Amanda is a hard-working student who volunteers to read and participate in class. She has good writing and verbal skills. Her foster parents said Amanda is always willing to help. The family for Amanda would be understanding and nurturing, and encourage her to develop her talents and abilities. Amanda said she wants to be loved and would like to have brothers and sisters.

**If you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children waiting to be adopted, please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390, or see the AICI web site – [www.adoptinfo-il.org](http://www.adoptinfo-il.org).**



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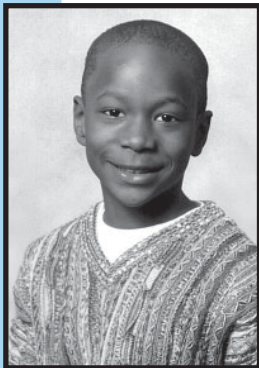
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# DO YOU KNOW A FAMILY FOR ME?

Call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois 800-572-2390.



Christopher [5522]



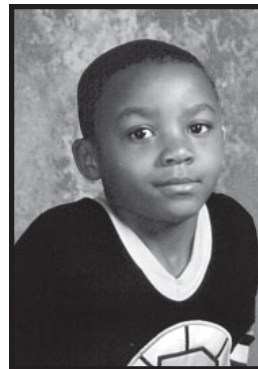
Trevien [7369]



Brandon [6906]



David [6954]



Quartey [6506]



Amanda [7409]

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